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Education Task Force - Educational Passport Subcommittee



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Composition of Committee

Theresa A. Ochoa is Chair of the Educational Passport Subcommittee. She is an Associate Professor at Indiana University and specializes in emotional and behavioral disorders. Her current research includes juvenile delinquency and the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports to reduce the school to prison pipeline. She is the founder of the Helping Offenders Prosper through Employment (HOPE) Mentoring Program.

Derek Grubbs is Co-Chair of the Educational Passport Subcommittee. He is the Director of Juvenile Education for the Indiana Department of Education: Division of Youth Services. Since 2000, he has worked with incarcerated youth as classroom teacher, special education coordinator, school principal, and currently as school superintendent of the state-operated juvenile schools. He is also a certified AdvancED auditor for schools with a focus on “special schools with special populations.

Susan Lightfoot is Chief Probation Officer and JDAI Co-Coordinator in Henry County and in this capacity has sought to work on strengthening and streamlining transitions for youth in foster care, residential and DOC placements. She is currently promoting a Justice/School partnership to foster positive school discipline and assist schools with alternative resources other than formal arrests and referrals to the Juvenile Justice System.

Mary Beth Buzzard is a member of the Correctional Education Association and a sitting member on the Governor of Indiana Educational Outcomes Task Force. She is a certified AdvancED auditor for schools with a focus on “special schools with special populations” and serves as a school principal at Logansport Juvenile Correctional Facility.

Jesse Cooperman is a master level graduate student at Indiana University. His area of concentration is secondary-level special education. He is currently serving as a special education teacher in an alternative school in Baltimore. He teaches students with extreme behavioral challenges with indeterminate suspensions from school.

Committee's Charge

1. Describe the educational history of vulnerable children and youth as they move from place to place and from school to school
2. Identify best-practice transition models at the state and national levels

Executive Summary

Children who are not in school get lost in the transition process as they move between different child-serving providers. Agencies and institutions treat vulnerable children as best they can but when children move from one institution or agency to another, their records do not consistently follow them. Currently, there is an institutional barrier around communication and information sharing between child-serving stakeholders. Addressing the need to share information between the various child-serving agencies and institutions is a critical first step in improving the lives of vulnerable children.

Introduction

Educational outcomes of youth exiting confinement. Balfanz, Spiridakis, Neild, and Legters (2003), examined the data from 1995 to 2000 on youth from one large, high-poverty metropolitan city, who were dropped from their school roll due to incarceration. The authors found that each year of the study, approximately 2% of the 8th to 12th grade students in the city were incarcerated, with approximately 67% of these students being in 9th grade. Balfanz et al. (2003) examined this subset of 9th grade students in more detail due to their high proportion in the study. The authors found that about 67% of the 9th grade students were repeating 9th grade and the majority of the students in the study had academic difficulties. Only .02% of first time 9th graders passed all of their 8th grade classes and only .05% had reading skills at their grade level. Those students enrolled in 9th grade for the first time attended school 58% of the time in 8th grade, while those students repeating 9th grade attended school roughly 33% of the time in the marking period prior to their incarceration. These results demonstrate how low academic skills combined with significant attendance issues exacerbate the difficulty of achieving academic success following incarceration.

Also of interest to researchers studying school related transition is what might predict successful reenrollment and attendance in school following release. Cusick, George, and Bell (2009) examined youth returning to Chicago Public Schools from 1996 to 2003. Cusick et al. (2009) found that 57% of previously incarcerated youth who had been enrolled in school prior to their incarceration were not enrolled in school 12 months after release and that 64% of those youth were not enrolled due to recommitment to a state correctional facility. They also found that of those who were enrolled in school, more than half were attending alternative schools for

juvenile offenders, indicating that specialized programs for youth offenders may be contributing to the increased number of youth enrolled in school upon return to the community. Others have found these numbers to be slightly different. Balfanz and colleagues (2003) found that 85% of youth exiting corrections attended non-selective high schools, 10% attended disciplinary schools for students who brought weapons to school or were involved in violent fights, and 5% attended vocational schools. These differences underscore that the availability of services geared towards youth exiting confinement may impact the likelihood of school reenrollment and completion.

Research also demonstrates that a desire to complete high school does not appear to be enough to propel returning youth to go on to earn a high school diploma. Balfanz and colleagues (2003) found that while 100% of the previously incarcerated youth in their study expected to obtain their high school diploma, in reality, 85% withdrew or dropped out of school within four years after release. Of those youth incarcerated as first time 9th graders, only 12% completed high school. Keeley (2006) also examined school reenrollment patterns in a sample of male youth released from a state operated correctional facility. He found that youth's expressed intentions to return to school did not predict whether they would reenroll, as less than half of the youth who reported intentions to return to school actually did. On the contrary, Keeley (2006) found that youth who reported no intentions of returning to school after their release were much more likely to follow through with their plans than those youth who intended to return. These findings demonstrate that, for youth who do not wish to return to school, other means for addressing their post-release needs should be explored rather than forcing these youth to return to school. For returning youth who do intend to complete their high school education, various barriers appear to keep them from returning to and attending school. Research examining these barriers may provide insight into how facilities, schools, and other providers can support youth in

transitioning successfully back into school. The results of these studies begin to highlight the vast academic needs of youth in corrections. However, the focus solely on academic characteristics and outcomes provides limited understanding regarding how facilities, schools, and other agencies may support youth in their transition back to learning environments.

Impact of academic achievement on school enrollment. Researchers in Florida have begun examining how academic success while youth are incarcerated may impact the likelihood of their return to school following their release (Blomberg, Bales, Mann, Piquero, & Berk, 2011; Blomberg, Bales, & Piquero, 2012). Blomberg, and colleagues (2011; 2012) studied a sample of 4,147 youth released from juvenile institutions in Florida to determine if academic achievement while incarcerated and school attendance following incarceration may act as a turning point away from delinquent behavior. When controlling for other potentially confounding variables, the researchers found that the odds of returning to school within the semester following release were 69% greater for youth with above average academic achievement while incarcerated, measured as the number of credits earned relative to length of stay (Blomberg et al., 2011). The authors also found that youth who were further behind academically as well as those who were sentenced to longer stays were significantly less likely to return to school following release. In their 2012 study, Blomberg and colleagues reported 10% more of the youth with above average achievement while incarcerated attended school post release. Similarly, Cusick, George, and Bell (2009) found that 25% of the youth in their sample who had been inactive in school prior to their incarceration were enrolled in school in the 12 months following their release, suggesting that, for some juveniles, incarceration may have provided experiences of school success and support that helped them reconnect to school after release.

These findings indicate that correctional facilities may provide youth with the opportunity to succeed academically in a way that they have never experienced before, perhaps allowing them to connect to school in ways they were not able to before incarceration. By finally experiencing academic success, these youth are more likely to continue down that path once they are released by not only attending school but attending more regularly, and by attending more regularly they are less likely to get rearrested. These results by no means suggest that incarceration is beneficial as a first alternative to academic success. However, the results do underscore the importance of giving youth the opportunity to succeed by planning for their return to school. Those supporting previously incarcerated youth in their return to school would benefit from additional research on the mechanisms already in place for supporting academic achievement while youth are incarcerated. It would be vital to assess how correctional facilities can support youth in achieving school success leading up to and following release from the facility in order to help them return to and stay in school. By supporting these youths' academic futures, providers may reduce the likelihood of future offending.

Impact of academic skills and school involvement on recidivism. Researchers also examined the interaction between school involvement and the likelihood of reoffending to determine how education may act as a protective factor for youth released from correctional facilities. Archwamety and Katsiyannis (2000) examined how academic skill deficits in incarcerated youth may be connected to the likelihood to recidivate. The authors compared recidivism rates between groups of youth receiving remedial math, remedial English, or no remedial services. Remedial services were provided to youth who were at least one grade level behind and scored below the 50% percentile based on normative achievement test scores. The researchers found that those receiving remedial services were nearly twice as likely to be

recidivists or parole violators. These findings are consistent with previous research connecting underlying academic skill deficits with an increased likelihood of reoffending. Relatedly, Blomberg and colleagues (2011) found that the likelihood of rearrest was 26.4% lower 12 months post-release for those who attended school more regularly and 15.3% lower at 24 months. In addition, the authors found that the youth who more regularly attended school were arrested for significantly less serious offenses at both 12 and 24 months following release. In comparison, Blomberg and colleagues (2012) reported that previously incarcerated youth with below average school attendance following release were significantly more likely to be re-arrested (52.4%) compared those with average attendance (40.8%). Thus, school attendance appears to assist youth in the reentry process and educational achievement appears to provide a positive life event that can alter criminal pathways (Blomberg et al., 2012).

School engagement and recidivism. Arguably the greatest predictor of successful transition is “engagement” or participation in proactive undertakings like attending school and/or working, within a short time period after release from a correctional facility. A group of researchers from the state of Oregon (Bullis & Yovanoff, 2002; Bullis, Yovanoff, & Havel, 2004; Bullis, Yovanoff, Mueller, & Havel 2002) tracked youth released from the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) over the course of 5 years to assess how youth fared in their return to the community. These researchers found that engagement that occurred within 6 months of release was one of the greatest predictors of later engagement and remaining out of the correctional system. Specifically, of the 531 youth tracked over the 5-year period, 51.18% were engaged at 6 months post release (time 1), while 46.13% were engaged at 12 months after release (time 2) (Bullis, Yovanoff, & Havel, 2004). Additionally, youth who were engaged at time 1 were 2.43 times more likely to be engaged at time 2, with virtually no youth who were engaged at time 2

returning to the OYA (Bullis, Yovanoff, & Havel, 2004). In addition, of those not engaged at time 1, 63.6% returned to correctional system or where arrested. Of those who were engaged at time 1, 12.1% were employed, 30.6% were in school, and 57.2% were working and in school. Bullis and Yovanoff (2002) examined the characteristics of those youth who *did not* return to OYA within 12 months following release to determine what might contribute to engagement. The authors found that 75% of participants were engaged 6 months post release and 66% of participants were engaged at 12 months post-release with those engaged at 6 months 4.05 times more likely to be engaged at 12 months. These findings indicate just how important providing immediate transition support for school reentry is following release from the juvenile correctional facilities as youth who are engaged immediately following release are significantly more likely to continue to be engaged and remain out of corrections. In addition, given that virtually none the youth who were engaged at 12 months post-release returned to OYA, these findings also suggest a need for transition support that extends a minimum of 12 months post release. Future research examining what types of transition support can improve engagement may help facilities and schools target their efforts in order to provide effective interventions.

Youth with disabilities. Other researchers have focused on how youth with disabilities in corrections compare to their non-disabled counterparts. Bullis and Yovanoff (2005) compared a sample of previously incarcerated youth with disabilities to a sample of youth without disabilities to identify what characteristics, if any, might be different. The authors found that despite more than 20 predictor variables, only 3 differed significantly between the 2 groups: type of crime resulting in incarceration, crime committed in urban settings, and failing a grade in public school. Specifically, the authors found that youth with disabilities were more likely to have committed a person related crime and were more likely to have committed that crime in an urban

setting. In regards to academic characteristics, 37.1% of youth with disabilities had failed a grade prior to commitment versus 21.8% of their non-disabled peers. The authors argued that while these results suggest some differences between the two groups, both are alike in most ways, especially in regards to academic difficulties. These authors argue that “instead of trying to ferret out differences between youth with and without disabilities who are incarcerated, it may be most fruitful to direct efforts at developing and implementing comprehensive transition services for all youth who are incarcerated—irrespective of whether or not they have a disability” (Bullis & Yovanoff, 2005, p. 138). Bullis and Yovanoff’s (2005) study further demonstrates the academic difficulties experienced globally by youth in corrections, emphasizing the importance of transition service directed at school success. While the authors found relatively few differences between disabled and non-disabled youth, future research examining the actual school related transition services provided to these youth may offer some insight into the levels of support provided to each of these groups of students.

While youth with and without disabilities may not appear significantly different, their outcomes following release are. Research in Oregon has found that youth with identified special education disabilities were 2.80 times more likely to return to the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) within 6 months following release compared to their non-disabled counterparts (Bullis, Yovanoff, Mueller, & Havel, 2002) and were 1.76 times less likely to be working and/or attending school (Bullis, Yovanoff, & Havel, 2004). In contrast, youth receiving mental health services were 2.25 times more likely to be working or attending school within 6 months after release, with this likelihood doubling for youth who were also engaged 1 year after release (Bullis & Yovanoff, 2002). It is unclear why youth with disabilities fare so poorly compared with those who receive mental health services. Perhaps youth receiving services for mental

health issues do not experience the same level of academic need, and as such are receiving the services more tailored to their needs. It is also possible that youth with disabilities are not being provided the level of academic support needed to experience success in school, or the difficulty in transitioning back into community schools is further confounded by underlying cognitive deficits. Whatever the case may be, youth with disabilities in correctional settings appear to need additional help in becoming engaged in academic pursuits following release.

In order to determine what educational transition services might be most beneficial to youth with disabilities who are released from correctional settings, researchers (Unruh, 2005; Unruh & Bullis, 2005) have attempted to obtain the perspectives of key stakeholders, including professionals in juvenile justice, social work, and education, as well as incarcerated youth and their families. In a series of studies out of Oregon (Unruh, 2005; Unruh & Bullis, 2005), the authors completed a needs assessment across 5 regions throughout the state of Oregon that included perspectives from youth receiving services by the transition project (primary stakeholders) and perspectives from parents, correctional treatment staff and educators, probation or parole, potential employers and vocational rehabilitation representatives via community forums (secondary stakeholders) to determine each perspective on the supports and barriers to transition from corrections. A total of 33 primary stakeholders and 127 secondary stakeholders participated in the study. The authors found that primary and secondary stakeholders agreed on 10 of the 12 identified strengths and barriers. Both groups identified access to community resources as important in supporting transitioning youth, including things like access to education through alternative education programs. Both groups also highly ranked family involvement as a support as well as access to school transition services like alternative schools, special-education supports and trained teachers at returning schools. Stakeholders identified

limited access to community resources as a critical barrier to reentry success. In particular they indicated that navigating access to these services following release from facilities was difficult, due in part to a lack of information sharing between agencies. Both groups also indicated that a lack of family support and involvement was a barrier to transition success, indicating the need for a stable home environment with guardians who were involved in transition, including educational planning. Finally, both groups of stakeholders indicated that transition services could also be a barrier when youth experienced a lack of support from community schools including difficulty reenrolling in school, a lack services targeting academic skill deficits and low earned high school credits. The authors then compared how primary and secondary stakeholders rank ordered the importance of these supports and barriers, finding that secondary stakeholders were more likely to highly rank access to community services and resources as supportive, youth were more likely to identify strengths and barriers within themselves, their family, and peer group as the most significant supports.

This line of research provides an important perspective into how transition planning and services must to address needs at both the individual and the systems level. Given the importance youth place on factors within themselves and their families, access to services is likely to be insufficient when youth and their families are unable participate and take ownership in the process of transition. In regards to education, both primary and secondary stakeholders identified school resources and educational transition support as important components of successful reentry. While these studies provided perspectives from a variety of agencies involved with previously incarcerated youth, a lack of perspective from community schools limits the extent of understanding of the types of supports and barriers within school settings that may be acting to help or hinder transition success. Additional research is needed from the

perspective of stakeholders at the community schools these youth return to in order to provide a fuller picture of how to best support youth at the school level.

Girls. Adolescent girls comprise a small but significant portion of the incarcerated population. However research on girls involved in the juvenile justice system is limited. Only 3 of the studies included data on girls in corrections, yet they provide a picture of a population who differs from their male counterparts. Using the tracking data from youth released from the OYA, Stent (2003) found that girls in custody were significantly more likely to have multiple psychiatric diagnoses, a history of suicide attempts and self-abuse, issues with substance abuse, and a history of running away. Of note, many of these characteristics were also significant predictors of girls remaining out of custody after release. In other words, girls with more risk factors for recidivism were actually less likely to return to correctional facilities. Additionally, Stent (2003) found that girls were nearly twice as likely to be engaged in school or work 12 months following their release from corrections. While these results appear incongruent with expectations given the current understanding of risk factors for delinquency, results may provide evidence that girls in corrections could experience greater benefits from transition services. However, when analyzing the same data set but from the perspective of youth who were engaged at 12 months post-release, Bullis, Yovanoff, Mueller, and Havel (2002) found that girls were 3.85 times less likely to be engaged at 6 months post-release. These results appear to be at odds with one another given that it comes from the same sample of youth. Further studies investigating this phenomenon may shed light onto this discrepancy.

Fields and Abrams (2010) examined how reentry perceptions differ for girls leaving confinement. Specifically, the researchers completed face-to-face surveys with 71 youth (36 boys and 35 girls) incarcerated in two California correctional facilities to assess how expected

transition needs and barriers differed between the 2 populations. Results indicated that the girls surveyed had greater aspirations for academic achievement. Of those surveyed, 76.5% of girls reported plans to obtain a General Educational Development (GED) or high school diploma compared to 60.6% of boys. Additionally, 66% of girls reported plans to attend college compared to 41% of boys. In terms of educational barriers, girls and boys reported similar concerns with their writing and math skills. Approximately 50% of youth did not know how many high school credits they had earned. Additionally, while 50% of youth reported no anticipated barriers to obtaining their educational goals, boys and girls who reported anticipated barriers were similar in their reporting; personal motivation, negative peer influences, academic readiness, and practical needs, were identified as potential barriers to educational success. When asked to rank order their concerns for their upcoming release, boys identified staying out of trouble as the highest level of concern, followed by gang involvement, and then completing an education. On the other hand for girls, completing an education was their biggest reentry concern.

These findings support the notion that girls in correctional facilities may have unique needs and aspirations that require specialized transition services different from services offered to boys. While girls tend to have greater need for multiple services based on their mental health and background experiences, these needs appear to act as a protective factor in that greater need likely translates into the provision of more intensive and comprehensive services that aid these girls in their returns home. In addition, girls appear more motivated to achieve broadly and at higher academic levels than boys in corrections, suggesting that girls may stand to benefit even more from transition services targeted at education. Research is needed to examine how girls in

corrections experience transition back into school to provide information how to best focus services in order to achieve optimum success.

Definitions

Transition services are “a coordinated set of activities for a juvenile offender, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from the community to a correctional setting, from one correctional setting to another, or from a correctional setting to post-incarceration activities including public or alternative education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing education, adult services, independent living, or community participation” (Clark, Mathur, & Holding, 2011, p.512).

For the purposes of the CISC, the law defines “vulnerable youth” as a child served by:

- (A) the department of child services;
- (B) the office of the secretary of family and social services;
- (C) the department of correction; or
- (D) a juvenile probation department.

Review of Literature

Literature Search and Selection

The search for literature on transition from correctional facilities included the use of eight electronic databases: JSTOR, Proquest, Google Scholar, and the EBSCO host databases aggregate ERIC, Academic Search Premiere, Psychinfo, and Criminal Justice Abstracts. A broad search for articles on post-release programming from juvenile correctional facilities was used in order to generate the most exhaustive list of literature on transition. The search to locate literature on academic transition included a Boolean search of combinations of the following words: academic, education, school, reentry, transition, aftercare, programs, youth, incarcerated, incarcerations, correctional facilities, custodial settings, and corrections. Articles published before 1990 were excluded in an effort to focus the analysis on recommendations generated from recent research.

Selection of literature followed a sequence of steps. Abstracts were first examined to verify whether each was related to transition from correctional settings. Then they were coded based upon domain within the umbrella of transition they fell under. Sources that dealt primarily with transition to educational settings were assigned the code “academic.” Sources that discussed transition to vocational or employment were assigned the code “vocational.” The sources that discussed primarily the transition back into the community or home were coded as “community/home.” Sources could be assigned more than one code based on the focus of its content.

A second phase of coding was conducted in which each source was also categorized by type of publication. Sources that presented original data were categorized as “research.” Sources that

discussed the research of others but did not present original data or presented new theories or critique existing theories were coded as “review.” Literature that did not fit into one of the two categories (i.e., research or review) was placed into a third category called “general.” The general category included sources like policy briefs, guides, and bulletins.

In the final phase of coding, the literature coded as review or general were examined to identify the sources that provided specific guidelines and recommendations for transition support. Once those articles were identified, this doctoral student and the primary investigator (PI) independently read each article and identified the recommendations within each source. This process was followed by a discussion of each article’s recommendations. The researchers combined these recommendations to create a master list of recommendations for transition from juvenile correctional facilities back into school settings.

The initial search for literature yielded 129 articles related to transition. After the initial examination of the abstracts of these sources, 84 sources were determined to focus on transition from juvenile correctional settings, thus were retained for inclusion in the review of literature. Phase 1 of coding found that 18 of the articles retained focused primarily on academic transition, 15 on vocational alone, and 8 on community/home. The remainder of sources focused on a combination of the three: 10 on academic and vocational transition, 4 on academic and community/home transition, 5 on vocational and community/home, and 25 focused on all three categories. This literature review focuses exclusively on the 55 studies coming from the different categories that contained an academic component. In the second phase of coding, 30 were determined to be research studies, 11 sources fell into the review category, and the remaining 14 sources were coded as general. In the final phase of coding, 14 of the 24 general and review sources were determined to provide transition related service recommendations. The

following section provides an overview of the studies identified as research or empirical studies followed by a synthesis of the general and review studies that create the best practice recommendations.

Characteristics and outcomes of incarcerated youth. Of the 30 sources that were coded as research, 20 examined academic characteristic and post-release outcomes of youth exiting confinement. Upon further analysis of these 20 sources, several topics emerged. Specifically, the research within this domain focused on educational outcomes of youth released from correctional facilities, how academic achievement while incarcerated interacts with recidivism, and how school engagement following release may act as a protective factor against recidivism. Additionally, a number of studies incorporated a special focus on subpopulations within the incarcerated populations, specifically youth with disabilities and girls in corrections. The next sections expand on this group of studies.

Research on school Reentry Programming

Research on the provision of reentry services and its impact on reentry outcomes is limited. The majority of research on transition has focused on outcomes related to recidivism and not on the efficacy of transition support and understanding young offenders' achievement of positive adjustment (Chung, Schubert, & Mulvey, 2007). Of the 30 research studies on transition, 8 reported on the efficacy of specific transition programs that also included a component related to reentry into school environments. The transition programs studied include the: (1) Natural Bridge Transition Program (Black, Brush, Grows, Hawes, & Hinkle, 1996); (2) Youth Reentry Specialist program (Karcz,1996); (3) Achieving Rehabilitation, Individualized Education, and Employment Success (Bullis, Moran, Benz, Todis, & Johnson, 2002); (4)

Intensive Aftercare Program (Weibush, Wagner, McNulty, Wang, & Le, 2005); (5) Nashua Youth Reentry Project (Hagner, Mallor, Mazzone, & Cormier, 2008); (6) Service Utilization to Promote the Positive Rehabilitation and Community Transition of Incarcerated Youth with Disabilities (Unruh, Gau, & Waintrup, 2009); (7) Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice Student Transition Model (Risler & O'Rourke 2009); and (8) Enhanced Transition Services for youth with disabilities (Clark, Mathur, & Holding, 2011). The following section provides a description of the research on school reentry services for previously incarcerated youth over the last 2 decades.

Natural Bridge Transition Program. Black et al. (1996) examined the impact of the academic and vocational programming of the Natural Bridge Juvenile Correctional Center on juvenile recidivism. School transition programming included a transition specialist who collected data to monitor progress, developed education plans, contacted schools prior to release to continue education plans, and helped prepare youth for return to public school or GED depending on need. The researchers tracked 207 youth upon release from the facility for 6 months. Twenty percent of participating youth were enrolled in school, 13% were both enrolled in school and employed, 23% were not enrolled in school or working but were also not in legal trouble, 10% had pending charges, and 14% had new official charges. While the authors report that just 33% were enrolled in school within 6 months post-release, it is difficult to infer meaning from this statistic. Since 20% of the overall sample had earned a GED prior to release without services, enrollment in school would not necessarily be expected and it is unclear how these youth factor into this statistic. In addition, post-incarceration educational placement seems to be more of an outcome measure than an area in need of intervention. It would be important to see how these numbers may have changed had more services been in place targeting reenrollment.

Youth Reentry Specialist program. Karcz (1996) used an experimental design to assess the effectiveness of the youth reentry specialist program (YRS) at transitioning youth with disabilities from correctional education to special education settings in local public schools and vocational programming. The study included 88 total participants; 44 youth in the treatment group and 44 in the control group. YRS services included the coordinated effort of one trained reentry specialist, housed and employed by the school district, who made connections for youth with special education and vocational services. Success was defined as (1) participation in vocational programming within 3 months post-release and (2) participation in special education programming within 3 months post-release. Logit statistical analysis was used to determine how YRS services, along with 11 other independent variables, contributed to student success.

Results were reported in relation to gender, race, and the number of high school credits earned prior to release. The authors found that those receiving YRS services were significantly more likely to be engaged in school and vocational pursuits 3 months after release from incarceration. Contrary to other research suggesting that more credits earned while incarcerated leads to greater engagement, Karcz (1996) found the opposite to be true; youth with higher averages of earned credits across race and gender were less likely to be engaged in special education and vocational programming 3 months post-release than those with lower earned credits. Other demographic data like age, length of stay, or offense history may have provided an explanation for these results in that perhaps some of these youth were older and thus less likely to return to school or these youth may have had a shorter sentence perhaps indicating reduced risk for reoffending. Research focused on both youth with and without disabilities may provide a deeper understanding on how these services could potentially benefit all youth.

Achieving Rehabilitation, Individualized Education, and Employment Success

(ARIES). Bullis and colleagues (2002) examined the usefulness of the ARIES project in helping youth with emotional disabilities achieve positive outcomes after release. The ARIES project, which was housed off school grounds, received referrals through the school district and other social service agencies such as juvenile probation and juvenile justice. Referrals included a combination of youth exiting confinement, youth serving probation, and youth in special education services in the district. Three teachers with experience in transition services served as transition specialists providing targeted and intensive services to a small caseload of youth. Services included an initial functional skills assessment to determine need, person-centered planning which included the youth, their caregivers, and any other service providers in the community, a focus on individualized education placement and support, service coordination with community based agencies, and multiple opportunities for incremental success.

The ARIES project received 120 referrals over the 3 years of funding with 85 youth entering the program. Of these 85 youth, 41 received services for 6 months while 61 left the project by graduating, terminating services, or moving out of the area prior to 6 months of programming. At the end of project finding, 24 participants remained, all of which were enrolled in school and began receiving transition services through the local school district. Of the 61 youth who left the project, data on educational outcomes was only available for 59. The authors found that 61% had completed an educational program, which included a combination of GEDs, high school diplomas, certificates of attendance, modified high school diplomas, and vocational certificates. Of those who had not completed an academic program, 87% expressed a desire to complete their education. The authors also assessed engagement, defined as reenrolling in school/completing an educational program or becoming employed and not rearrested or committed to a facility for an emotional or substance abuse problem. Statistical analysis

revealed that 60% of females and 67% of males successfully engaged while participating in the project. While these findings suggest that the personal and intensive transition services provided by these transition specialists may have helped youth with emotional disabilities to engage in school, the absence of a control group makes true comparison difficult. Additionally, the authors do not break down results by referral type. Specifically, it is impossible to ascertain where the youth who were released from correctional settings actually fit within the data. A break down of results in this way would likely provide more salient information on how work with transition specialists specifically helps youth transitioning from confinement back into school.

Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP). Wiebush, Wagner, McNulty, Wang, & Le, 2005 examined the efficacy of the IAP program on youth outcomes following release at sites in major cities in Colorado, Nevada, and Virginia. Given that implementation was slightly different in each of the states, the authors provide disaggregated data by state in order to provide a more accurate picture of the impact of programming on youth outcomes. Across states, participants were randomly assigned to the treatment or control conditions and included only incarcerated males who were identified as “high-risk” for recidivism. The study included 118 participants (67 IAP and 51 control) in Colorado, 220 participants (100 IAP and 120 control) in Nevada, and 97 (63 IAP and 34 control) participants in Virginia. The major components of the program included: individualized case planning, continuity in case management and service delivery, coordination and cooperation between facility and aftercare staff, formal transition structures, processes, and/or programs, small caseloads, intensive supervision and control mechanisms, access to services in the community, and a system of graduated rewards and sanctions (Wiebush et al., 2005). Programming ran from the fall of 1995 through the summer of 2000.

Youth in the IAP program, regardless of state of residence, had slightly greater, though

not significant, reconviction rates ranging from 56% to as high as 81%. IAP youth from both Colorado and Virginia were more likely to return to school for 2 or more months post release compared to controls; 50% for IAP youth compared to 33% of controls in Colorado and 65% for IAP youth compared with 44% for control youth in Virginia. However, these results were not statistically significant. Additionally, the researchers reported that while the 3 sites were mostly successful at adhering to the model, some problems with treatment fidelity existed. For example, implementation of treatment was the strongest for youth in Colorado. However, the services provided to both treatment and control groups in Colorado were quite similar making it difficult to argue that differences in services would account for differences in youth outcomes. In Nevada, services received by IAP youth were dramatically different with a much greater emphasis on individual transition needs. However, high turnover rate in the community liaison position, (i.e. parole officer that maintained communication with providers in the community) diminished their ability to coordinate services in the community and delayed the creation of a community support network for released youth. In Virginia, implementation was also high, containing an especially strong emphasis on supervision and community service coordination carried out by parole officers following release. However, one of the two sites in Virginia had implementation difficulties, including a 12-month long vacancy in the case manager position, which meant that IAP youth did not receive services while incarcerated.

While Wiebush et al. (2005) may suggest that intensive transition services do not appear to reduce recidivism or improve outcomes for youth released from confinement, study limitations are present. Attrition created smaller than anticipated sample sizes, thus leading to limited statistical power. Additionally, the study focused only on high-risk males, leaving out girls in corrections as well as youth from other risk categories that may have benefitted from

these transition services. The more intensive supervision and monitoring that was provided to IAP youth compared to those in the control group may have also contributed the increase in recidivism discovery that may not have happened to control youth who were not being so carefully monitored. Finally, little information was given in regards to the type of specific transition services provided to aide youth reentering school settings, appearing instead to focus more heavily on intense supervision and monitoring. Perhaps greater efforts to support youth in educational pursuits would have impacted overall recidivism rates.

Nashua Youth Reentry Project. Hagner et al. (2008) used qualitative interviews and outcome data to assess the effectiveness of the Nashua Youth Reentry Project. Adjudicated youth who had been removed from their home for at least 2 weeks and were between the ages of 14 and 17, with either an identified disability or receiving services from a mental health system, were included in the study. The Nashua Youth Reentry Project services were managed by a career and education specialist and directed by an interagency transition committee. Services included: (a) person-centered planning, (b) support for high school completion, (c) career preparation and employment support, (d) interagency coordination, and (e) mentoring and social support (Hanger et al., 2008. p. 241). More specifically, youth were included in transition planning; alternative paths for high school completion were sought when appropriate; employment support was multifaceted including career exploration, job shadowing, and assistance in finding and maintaining internships and employment; transition teams consisted of representatives from schools, juvenile justice, vocational services, and mental health to help coordinate transition. Each participant was also matched with an adult mentor who provided support. The researchers collected data on engagement (defined as attending school regularly, actively working towards a GED, working at least 15 hours per week, or actively searching for a

job) and used semi-structured interviews to determine the factors associated with successful and unsuccessful transition.

The researchers found that 90% of participants identified school as an important factor of success in transition. However, only 42.9% returned to their local high school while 38.1% chose to study for the GED. Of those who did not return to school, participants reported feeling lost or pushed out of school. They indicated that the schools were unwilling or didn't have the means to support them. Timing was also an issue with youth returning to school following release. Many felt they were either too far behind or were attempting to reenter in the middle of a semester which made catching up nearly impossible. The research had limitations. The research was limited in that the results did not include youth who recidivated, thus potentially leaving out chronic offenders. The research also had a high rate of attrition.

Service Utilization to Promote the Positive Rehabilitation and Community Transition of Incarcerated Youth with Disabilities (SUPPORT). Unruh, Gau, and Waintrup (2009) measured the effectiveness of Project SUPPORT, a statewide reentry intervention provided to youth with disabilities in Oregon. Participants included youth with identified special education disabilities, psychiatric diagnosis, or both, who were released from OYA. OYA services included pre-release training and coordinated reentry planning. A transition specialist, along with vocational counselors, treatment managers, parole officers, and facility and community education staff, designed transition plans for youth based on their unique needs. The transition specialist coordinated services, ensuring that youth were assessed and transition plans developed based on reentry needs, that the reentry services were ready to start immediately upon exit, and that the services continued after youth were released.

Results indicated that twelve months post-release, 85% of youth had not been adjudicated or convicted of a new crime. The study also showed that the steepest slope for recidivism occurred between 10 and 24 months, with 72% having not recidivated at 24 months. These results are promising given that previous research has found recidivism rates as high as 80% for youth who do not receive transition services. However the study does have limitations. It is difficult to determine the efficacy of transition services without a control group with which to compare outcomes. In addition, specific community adjustment variables (like employment and school enrollment) and their impact on recidivism could not be identified in the analyses due to small sample size.

Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice Student Transition Program. Risler and O'Rourke (2009) describe the effectiveness of the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice Student Transition Program. The student transition model used transition goals to guide educational programming while youth were incarcerated. The overarching goal of programming is for youth to leave correctional confinement with functional skills and academic or vocational achievement in the form of a GED, diploma, or vocational certificate. Transition within the model occurred in 4 stages during incarceration: intake, ongoing/release, release review, and formal exit interview. During the intake stage, student plans were created and portfolios were started to aid in transition. During the ongoing/release stage, student progress was continually monitored and youth were assessed to revise plans as needed. Release review occurred 60 days prior to release and included review of the portfolio, recommendations for placement following release, discussion of transition activities and services to take place once youth leave, as well as a discussion of needs and follow up treatment. The final stage, or exit interview, occurred 10 days before release to documents progress and finalize student portfolios. At each stage, coordination

between services like probation/parole and education expanded. In the last two stages, parents and guardians were included in transition planning.

The researchers employed a quasi-experimental design examining the archival data of a non-random convenience sample of 100 youth released from long-term facilities who had completed an academic program while incarcerated. Probation/parole specialists provided the survey data to the research team, meaning that participant information was collected from already existing records. The authors found that just 19% of the 97 participants with available data had committed a new offense upon return to their community. The authors also found that 48% of the 68 youth for whom follow-up data were available were employed while 13% had entered an educational program upon return to the community. It is important to note that return to an educational placement was unlikely for most youth studied given that all of the youth included in the study had completed some type of educational programming prior to release. Finally, results indicated that 43% of the 39 participants with available data identified supportive family as an important factor for successful reentry, while 13% identified stable employment as an important factor in reentry, and 10% indicated that education was an important. However, issues within the study limit its generalizability. Issues with incomplete and/or missing data, including data for education variables, reduce generalizability of the results. Additionally, a non-random convenience sample in one state further limited the findings.

Transition Services for Juvenile Detainees with Disabilities. Clark, Mathur, and Holding (2011) compared the effectiveness of basic transition services versus enhanced transition services for youth with disabilities transitioning out of confinement from 2 county detention centers. All youth with disabilities in confinement were randomly assigned to a treatment group or a control group. Two transition specialists were trained to provide all youth

with identified disabilities support to:

- 1) develop and coordinate transition activities;
- 2) collaborate with probation officers, detention educators, and public and alternative school personnel, employers, and service providers;
- 3) assist the special education teacher in the community school with the development of Individualized Transition Plans (ITPs);
- 4) develop and implement a student Transition Portfolio;
- 5) assist in the establishment of a seamless transfer of records and services between detention and public, alternative, and secure care schools;
- 6) increase interagency communication and linkages to what or whom?;
- 7) establish a computerized educational tracking system to follow participants? ;
- 8) collect data on youth with disabilities while in detention and after release

Youth in the control group met with the transition specialist on two occasions and were provided a basic transition portfolio that consisted of information on special education rights, their IEP, transition plan, transition resource packet, and psychoeducational evaluation results. Youth in the treatment group were given enhanced services; they met regularly with the transition specialists, were given additional academic and vocational assessment measures and developed a comprehensive transition portfolio that included, in addition to everything the control group received, assessment results, transcripts from previous schools, credit analysis, health records, resume, certificates earned, and work samples from when they were in confinement.

Clark et al. (2011) employed one of the most rigorous methodologies of the available studies on transition programming. They used a randomized, single blind, quasi-experimental comparison group study. Sixty-eight youth received enhanced transition services while 76 youth

served as the control group receiving only basic transition services. Results from the Clark study showed that youth with disabilities who received enhanced services from a transition specialist were 64% less likely to recidivate, or return to detention at 15 and 30 days post release. However, at 45 days and beyond, group membership was no longer predictive of recidivism. The authors reported numerous limitations in the study, however. For example, attrition occurred when participants turned 18, as data was no longer available once they aged out of the system. Replication of treatment was also limited given the specificity of service provision and the variation that exists between facilities. Other demographic information may have been more helpful to determine outcomes for these youth. Information on engagement and more in depth information on what caused youth to return to detention may have given more information on this issue.

Cases

Vulnerable children are characterized as highly mobile and difficult to track and find if they are not in school. We used a cross-sectional approach to show how vulnerable children move from school, to protective services, probation, corrections and/or mental health, different child serving agencies or residential institutions.

Thomas' Case: Regular Community School (by Jesse Cooperman)

Thomas is a high school student, he received special education services. At the time of this report, his high school counselor reported that he was supposed to transfer to another school in the district, but when she looked up those records, there was nothing saying that he enrolled in the new school. His counselor has no idea where Thomas is.

Thomas's grades were poor during his time school. He failed most of his classes, putting little to no effort in his work. He was capable of doing the work and getting good grades but he would not try at all. Thomas's behavior was poor at school as well. He constantly looked for attention from his peers during class. He sat often in the back of the room, dancing and singing enough to cause distractions. Sometimes he would raise his hand to answer a question posed by the teacher, but his answer would be non-sense, trying to be funny.

In addition, he was showed constant disrespect to many teachers, in all subject areas. He would talk back to them, roll his eyes when he was asked to do something, purposefully turn his back when the teacher was talking to him, or laughed at the teacher when he was being reprimanded. He did all of this while in front of other peers to get their attention.

Information about Thomas' background and home life is minimal. His counselor and teacher of record tried to call home on multiple occasions but they rarely got someone to answer the phone. On the rare occasion his teacher of record reached his mother and planned to call or text messaged, when she called at the scheduled time, his mother would not answer. His sister was also in the same school, also had an Individualized Education Program and but dropped out before completing junior year.

Noteworthy Points about Thomas

- Poor academic performance
- Persistent behavioral challenges
- Diagnosed with emotional behavioral disorder
- Limited parental involvement

Joe's Case: Probation (by Susan Lightfoot)

Joe is a sixteen year old youth who is in the 9th grade. His most recent grades are 3 F's, 2 D's and a B- which are higher for Joe than normal. His grades in the eighth grade were all D's & F's with the exception of 4 C's. Until recently, he was attending school, but for the fall of 2016 and the spring of 2017 was placed on "Homebound" study. Homebound consisted of attending school 1-2 hours per day. At the time of this report, Joe stopped showing up for school for his homebound meetings.

Joe was retained in the seventh grade and has limited reading and writing skills. Joe has an has a disability diagnosis and is provided services under the category of Learning Disabilities (LD). Joe has had behavior referrals for: lack of attention; failure to comply with teacher

directions; failure to complete work; sleeping in class, arrives late to school and classes. Joe has a history of behavioral problems that include time-outs and “out of school detentions.” He has basically given up on ever obtaining a high school diploma and has little desire to seek his TASC (formerly the GED). His future plans include wanting to enroll at the Hoosier Youth Academy in Knightstown. Joe would also like to be a roofer by trade. At the time of this report, probation just received a new referral on Joe for breaking into cars.

Joe is the oldest of three children who reside with their mother. Joe has a younger brother who is thirteen and a younger sister who is twelve. Joe has never had contact with his biological father, but was close to his stepfather who was shot and killed. Joe’s mother works nights at a local factory and Joe stays home with his brother and sister, presumably taking on caretaking responsibilities. It is believed that Joe stays up late each night playing video games while his mother is at work. Joe’s mother appears to care about the children and wants them to be successful, but is not warm and loving.

Noteworthy Points about Joe

- Poor academic performance
- Persistent behavioral challenges
- Diagnosed with LD
- Assumes supervision of siblings while mother is at work

Terry’s Case: Juvenile Corrections (by Mary Beth Buzzard)

Terry is in correctional confinement. He was living with his brother and several other juveniles in a home with no water or electricity prior to his incarceration. Psychometric test results indicate Terry's estimated IQ is 80. This score is in the below average range. Terry was last enrolled in the tenth grade at Tucker Alternative School and does not have any diagnosed special education needs. He repeated the fourth grade due to his "behavior". Terry reports that he has been suspended from school thirteen times. He related these suspensions to "fights". Terry indicated that he has also been expelled from school and has a history of truancy.

Terry previous diagnoses' include Schizophrenia (age nine), Bipolar Disorder, ADHD, Conduct Disorder, Nicotine Dependence, Physical Abuse of a Child, Parent-Child Relational Problem, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Terry was placed at Resource in 2015 and at Wernle in 2017, He escaped from both placements, Midtown provided Terry with school-based counseling services while he was in elementary school.

Terry reported that at the age of fifteen, he was employed at a restaurant washing dishes and prepping food. He estimated he worked twenty-five hours per week. Terry quit the position because "I just quit". He mentioned he did like the job because he was "making money".

Terry has been arrested with one of his brothers and witnessed another brother stab an individual and run down another with a car. His probation officer disclosed that Terry's criminal thinking is influenced by the multiple siblings and parent in his life. His mother was badly injured during a homemade drug making fire and there was history of step-father allegedly encouraging him to steal at times. Terry was neglected by his mother and physically abused by his step-father and at one time the abuse resulted in a concussion. His mom has had 77 involvements with DCS. Terry reports that some of his closest friends use illegal drugs and alcohol and some have been arrested. It is believed Terry associates with members of the STG

“150”and he has disclosed that he has family members involved with gang. Terry enjoys spending time with his 2 ½ month old son.

Noteworthy Points about Terry

- Poor academic performance
- Diagnosed with mental health disorders attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and below average IQ
- No reported special education services via an IEP
- Persistent behavioral challenges
- School disciplinary sanctions
- History of neglect, abuse, and exposure to violence and drugs

Best Practice Recommendations

Sixteen of 24 articles in total provided transition service recommendations for juvenile justice professionals, educators, community service workers, and families. The remaining eight sources contained only a minute focus on educational transition from confinement with no practice recommendations thus not providing any new or substantive information and were not included in this literature review. The 16 sources come from round table discussions, agency reports, and bulletins from organizations like the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Stephens & Arnette, 2000), the Youth Reentry Task Force (Nellis & Wayman, 2009) and state specific organizations like Virginia's JustChildren (Geddes & Keenan, 2006). These recommendations were made based on nationwide, state specific, and local outcomes of youth released from confinement as well as the professional opinion of key stakeholders in education, mental health, and juvenile justice. Analysis of the "general" and "review" literature revealed that specific practice recommendations occurred across 4 distinct stages of incarceration: facility entry, rehabilitation and education (R&E), preparation for school reentry (P for SR), and school reentry. Major overarching goals emerged from each of these stages with actions recommended to support the specific stage of transition. These stage specific goals and actions constitute best practice guidelines for transition at each stage of incarceration. Table 3 provides a summary of this best practice framework including major goals at each stage and the actions that should be carried out in order to best support incarcerated youth in transitioning back into school environments.

Entry to Facility. The entry process is the first phase of incarceration, lasting several days or weeks. The literature indicates that the overarching goal of the entry stage is that transition planning begins as soon as the youth enter the facility (Baltodano, Mathur, & Rutherford 2005; O'Rourke & Satterfield, 2005). The best practice literature also recommends several ways that facilities can accomplish early transition planning. A comprehensive assessment is recommended in order to determine each youth's strengths and areas of need to help guide service recommendations both within the facility and following release (Gies, 2000; Hogan, Bullock, & Fritsch, 2010; O'Rourke & Satterfield, 2005; Stephens & Arnette, 2000). In order to plan for the youth's programming while incarcerated and to design educational goals, the literature suggests that records from the youth's previous school be requested and obtained within the first 2 weeks of entering the facility (Gemignani, 1994; Hogan, Bullock, & Fritsch, 2010; Muller, 2011; O'Rourke & Satterfield, 2005; Sheldon-Sherman, 2012). Another important aspect at the entry stage is the establishment of a staff person dedicated to transition (Clark & Unruh, 2010; Gies, 2000). The transition specialist is point person on transition; the hub of communication to support transition for youth during incarceration and continue to track youth outcomes following release. Scholars and practitioners in the field recommend this series of activities, which begin at the outset of confinement, to lay the groundwork for successful transition.

Rehabilitation. The broad goal for the second stage of incarceration is that the education programming provided to youth should focused on youth's transition from confinement to the community (Baltodano, Mather, & Rutherford, 2005; Ingersol & LeBoueff, 1997). The formation of multi-disciplinary teams, including separate and distinct groups of individuals for each youth, is the first step in helping youth transition from confinement. (Ingersol & LeBoueff,

1997; Muller, 2011; Nellis & Wayman, 2009; Osher, Amos, & Gonsoulin, 2012). The multi-disciplinary team could include members from within the facility, including the transition staff person and representatives from education, mental health, and corrections as well as members from outside of the facility like a probation or parole officer, school counselor, therapist from the community, or even a church leader for youth with strong religious affiliations. Some advocate for this team being guided by a professional outside of the juvenile justice system (Barton, 2006; Ingersol & LeBoueff, 1997; O'Rourke & Satterfield, 2005). Barton (2006) asserts that establishing a community-based team coordinator allows for oversight from intake through post-release that is not always possible with facility based providers. Best-practice guidelines also recommended that youth and their families are involved members of the transition team as much as possible (Geddes & Keenan, 2006; Risler & O-Rourke, 2009; Sheldon-Sherman, 2010). Clinkenbeard and Zohra (2012) found that out only 14% out of 343 in confinement were able to determine concrete strategies to meet their post-release goals and address potential barriers to success following release. In order to help youth succeed, they suggest that youth need to be included in planning for post-release in order to guide strategies to help youth achieve transition goals and recognize and overcome potential obstacles. Some literature suggests taking a team-based approach a step further (Clark & Uhrh, 2010; Geddes & Keenan, 2006; Sheldon-Sherman, 2010). The delineation of the roles and responsibilities for each member of the transition team is recommended that also includes putting an accountability system in place for meeting transition goals.

A comprehensive individualized plan should be created and implemented for each youth based on the recommendations of the multi-disciplinary transition team and the results of the comprehensive intake assessment (Gies, 2000; Muller, 2011; Nellis & Wayman, 2009; Osher,

Amos, & Gonsoulin, 2012). The plan should outline educational goals for the youth during their incarceration and after their release as well as the support systems needed to support these goals throughout incarceration and in their return to community schools. Designing and compiling a transition portfolio is also recommended as a way to organize transition documentation and provide the youth with a resource to consult with during confinement and after release (Clark & Uhrh, 2010; Osher, Amos, & Gonsoulin, 2012; O'Rourke & Satterfield, 2005). Elements of a strong portfolio might include the transition plan, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and information on student' rights for youth with disabilities, academic, vocational, and/or psycho-educational evaluation results, transcripts from all schools attended, resume, vital records, certificates or diplomas, work samples, contact information for the transition team, and information on community resources. Finally, in order to achieve the goal of transition guiding educational programming, ongoing progress monitoring is recommended to oversee academic goals and make modification when plans do not seem to be working (Clark & Uhrh, 2010; Hogan, Bullock, & Fritsch, 2010; Osher, Amos, & Gonsoulin; Risler & O-Rourke, 2009).

Preparation for Reentry to School. In the period of time just prior to release from the facility, transition preparation often begins to take priority, as educational plans require finalization before the youth leave care. The overarching goal for preparing for school reentry is to determine the most appropriate educational placements for youth in their communities (Geddes & Keenan, 2006; Gemignani, 1994). Risler and O'Rourke (2009) recommend beginning 60 days prior to release by meeting with the transition team to review the youth's portfolio and discuss plans to return home. The transition team meeting is designed to begin the finalization process for educational transition while giving enough time to complete transition related activities prior to release. In addition, it is recommended that youth be accompanied on a

visit to the school they will be returning to after they are released (Sheldon-Sherman, 2010; Stephens & Arnette, 2000). The pre-release visit can help to reduce apprehension on the part of the youth and the school and begin discussions on ways to best meet the needs of the youth and the ways in which the school can provide support. In instances where youth are not able or allowed to leave the facility, the transition team can find other ways to meaningfully involve the youth, their family, and the school based on the individual needs of the youth.

Together the transition team meeting and pre-release school visit help prepare the transition team to finalize plans for educational placement prior to release (Gemignani, 1994; Sheldon-Sherman, 2010). Suggestions for finalizing educational plans include more than simply determining where the youth will attend school. It is also recommended that youth are enrolled and registered for classes prior to leaving the facility (Gemignani, 1994). ‘Rourke and Satterfield (2005) suggest conducting a formal exit interview at least 10 days prior to release with the transition team present. As part of the exit interview they recommend reviewing progress and finalizing the transition portfolio, which will be given to parents/guardians and probation/parole as a resource. Despite being a relatively brief period of time, the activities accomplished at preparation for school reentry stage are vital to transition success.

Reentry. After youth have been released from confinement, the main goal is to get them involved in some type of schooling as soon as possible (Anthony, Samples, Kervor, Ituarte, Lee, & Austin, 2010; Clark & Unruh, 2010; Geddes & Keenan, 2006; Hogan, Bullock, & Fritsch, 2010). As this is the most often neglected stage in transition service provision, the literature recommends a number of steps to take in order to ensure that youth not only begin educational pursuits but that they follow through on their educational pursuits. In order to plan for post-release educational services, community schools will need to receive the educational records of

students in a timely fashion (Clark & Unruh, 2010; Hogan, Bullock, & Fritsch, 2010; O'Rourke & Satterfield, 2005; Roy-Stevens, 2004; Stephens & Arnette, 2000). Stephens and Arnette (2000) indicate that information sharing is the foundation of good transitional services; therefore if schools do not have information about schooling received at the correctional facilities, disruption of services can result and may cause youth to disengage entirely after they are released. Other scholars recommend enrolling youth in transitional educational placements to ease their transition back into community-based schools (Roy-Stevens, 2004; Stephens & Arnette, 2000). Roy-Stevens (2004) emphasized the importance of creating formal collaborations between juvenile justice and education and that transitional education placements may be better equipped to address the barriers previously incarcerated youth face in accessing educational services. Better tracking systems as well as curriculum and instruction designed with this population in mind may keep transitioning youth from getting lost in the educational system and falling through the cracks.

Mazzotti and Higgins (2006) recommend providing intensive academic support both during and after the school day given that a large proportion of incarcerated youth are below grade level and may have identified disabilities. This added support may help students to feel more welcome and involved in their school while positively impacting their achievement and motivation. Mazzotti and Higgins (2006) also recommend appointing school based advocates for both parents and their recently released children. These advocates can help families navigate the return to school and to identify and access any additional services the youth may need. Other authors recommend employing school-based probation officers (Hogan, Bullock, & Fritsch, 2010; Stephens & Arnette, 2000). Probation officers working out of the schools have better access to youth to gain knowledge about where youth are struggling academically to determine

how the juvenile justice system can better help to support them. It may also foster a sense of collaboration and shared goals between juvenile justice and education. Finally, as in the previous stages, it is recommended that progress is monitored and goals modified as needed (Barton, 2006; Clark & Unruh, 2010; Osher, Amos, & Gonsoulin, 2012; O'Rourke & Satterfield, 2005; Sheldon-Sherman, 2010; Stephens & Arnette, 2000). A system for continued tracking and measuring of outcomes may mean that any issues that arise can be caught early enough to successfully intervene. Youth needs and goals may also change during this period of post-release. With ongoing monitoring, these needs can be taken into account and services altered to meet new goals. These methods for engaging students immediately and for a sustained period of time following release can make the difference in creating successful post-release outcomes.

This literature review provides an overview of the characteristics, outcomes, and services provided to youth as they are released from correctional facilities and transition back into communities and schools. Researchers have found that youth in corrections tend to be behind academically, and have lower rates of pre-incarceration school attendance than their non-incarcerated peers (Balfanz, et al., 2003). Most incarcerated youth believe they will go on to complete their high school education (Keeley, 2006), however; as many as 85% drop out of school within 4 years following their release from correctional facilities (Balfanz, Spiridakis, Neild, & Legters, 2003). Conversely, studies also indicate that incarceration may be a catalyst for academic achievement for some youth by allowing previously unsuccessful youth to experience academic success and obtain or reconnect to academic pursuits (Blomberg, Bales, Mann, Piquero, & Berk, 2011; Blomberg, Bales, & Piquero, 2012; Cusick, George, & Bell, 2009). It is clear that previously incarcerated youth have significant academic challenges and

necessities that require services designed to meet their needs as they attempt to continue their education once they leave the facility.

While academic outcomes of youth in corrections are of importance in their own right, researcher have gone a step further to focus on how school success may act as a protective factor by keeping youth from reoffending. Youth who were attending school regularly following release from corrections were less likely to be rearrested and that those who were engaged in school immediately following release were more likely to remain engaged in school and less likely to return to a correctional facility (Blomberg, Bales, Mann, Piquero, & Berk, 2011; Blomberg, Bales, & Piquero, 2012; Bullis & Yovanoff, 2002; Bullis, Yovanoff, & Havel, 2004; Bullis, Yovanoff, Mueller, & Havel 2002). Additional research exploring the types of transition support that may improve engagement could help schools increase the likelihood that previously incarcerated youth will remain engaged in school following their release.

Research on subpopulations of incarcerated youth, including those with disabilities and girls in corrections, provides a unique perspective often lacking in the research on youth in corrections. While youth with disabilities tend to be similar to non-disabled peers in terms of their academic skills, they fare worse in their post release outcomes, indicating that youth with disabilities may not be receiving the level of support they need upon their return to community schools (Bullis, Yovanoff, & Havel, 2004; Bullis, Yovanoff, Mueller, & Havel, 2002). Additionally, while girls in corrections appear to be at a higher risk for recidivism due to multiple diagnoses, a history of running away, and a greater likelihood of substance abuse issues; girls are actually less likely to recidivate and are more likely to be engaged in school following release (Stent, 2003). Researchers have also found that girls in corrections tend to have better academic skills and greater educational aspirations (Fields & Abrams, 2010) indicating that girls

in corrections may receive more benefit from transition services targeted at educational achievement. Additional research is needed to examine the transition experiences of girls released from confinement as well as the transition related services that are provided at the community school level.

Only a small number of studies have actually examined the efficacy of education transition services on post-release outcomes. These transition studies were disparate in nature, with some focusing solely on school transition (Black et al., 1996; Bullis et al., 2002; Karcz, 1996; Hagner, Malloy, Mazzone, & Cormier, 2008; O'Rourke & Satterfield, 2005) and others focusing more broadly on transition to the community with a small component related to school reentry (Clark, Mathur, & Holding, 2011; Unruh, Gau, & Waintrup, 2009; Wiebush et al., 2005). The results of the efficacy studies on transition programming focused on 2 domains: recidivism and engagement in school. Reported reconviction rates for youth receiving transition related services varied between 20% (Black et al., 1996) and 81% (Wiebush et al., 2005). Overall, results appeared to indicate that those who received some type of transition support related to their education were more likely to return to school following their release (Black et al., 1996; Bullis, et al., 2002; Hagner, Malloy, Mazzone, & Cormier, 2008; Karcz, 1996; Wiebush et al., 2005). Finally, results indicated a need for sustained post-release transition support in that recidivism was most likely to occur between 10 and 24 months after release (Unruh, Gau, and Waintrup, 2009).

Of the eight transition programming research studies, five included only participants with disabilities. Contrary to studies indicating that youth with disabilities fare more poorly compared to youth without disabilities, youth with disabilities who received transition services were slightly more likely to be involved in school and/or working. All but two of the studies on

transition programming included participants of both sexes, with data disaggregated based on sex. Results on the differences between boys and girls who received educational transition services were mixed with one study indicating that girls who receive school transition services were more likely to be enrolled in school (Karcz 1996) and another finding no significant difference between boys and girls in school engagement following release from corrections (Bullis et al., 2002).

The studies on the provision of transition services related to educational reentry have provided some support for the value of transition support. However, many of the limitations inherent in working with previously incarcerated youth were present. Small sample size, attrition, missing data, limited data on school outcomes, and lack of experimental control, make generalizing the results of this research difficult. Given the small number of studies that examine the efficacy of school transition supports, there is still much to be learned about the ways in which facilities, schools, and families are capable of supporting return to school following incarceration as well as how transition services impact educational outcomes of previously incarcerated youth.

Much of our understanding on what constitutes best practice in educational transition support comes from non-research sources including round table discussions, state and organizational reports, and bulletins from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. These non-research sources provide a practical perspective and prescriptive approach to give facilities and schools specific practice recommendations across each stage of incarceration. Upon entry into a facility, it is recommended that transition planning begin immediately (Baltodano, Mathur, & Rutherford 2005; O'Rourke & Satterfield, 2005). As youth begin the rehabilitation and education phase of incarceration, scholars advise that transition back

into the community should continue to guide educational programming decisions (Baltodano, Mather, & Rutherford, 2005; Ingersol & LeBoueff, 1997). When youth begin to prepare for their return to school, it is recommended that focus shift to determining the most appropriate school placement in the community to help meet needs and support educational goals (Geddes & Keenan, 2006; Gemignani, 1994). As youth reenter their schools after they are released, it is recommended that they be reengaged in educational pursuits as soon as possible in order to create a seamless transition and increase the likelihood that youth maintain the momentum achieved while incarcerated (Anthony, Samples, Kervor, Ituarte, Lee, & Austin, 2010; Clark & Unruh, 2010; Geddes & Keenan, 2006; Hogan, Bullock, & Fritsch, 2010). Beyond practical applications, these best practice sources also provide a framework with which to compare transition practices already taking place in correctional facilities and community schools, providing a lens through which future research may examine the provision of school transition supports.

Information Sharing Models in Indiana

Transitioning out of an agency or program appears to pose more challenges than transitioning into a program among vulnerable populations. Transition services are a coordinated set of activities designed to promote movement between placements (e.g., from school to community agency, from one community agency to another community agency, home to correctional setting, correctional setting to home or educational placement). When youth enter an agency or program they are physically present. However, once the youth is discharged, agencies struggle significantly to keep track of the youth's whereabouts. These youth are described in the literature as invisible. We believe that it is the lack of information sharing among and between service agencies and institutions that is a significant factor contributing to the invisibility of

vulnerable children. Therefore, institutional and communication barriers are the most pressing barrier to service delivery among vulnerable populations. We have identified two information sharing models in the state of Indiana that might inform how to share sensitive information among and between professional and agencies serving this population of youth.

- 1) CHIRPS – immunization records: <https://chirp.in.gov/main.jsp>
- 2) INSPECT – drug monitoring program: <https://www.in.gov/pla/inspect/>
- 3) Opioid Addiction Multi Agency Coordination :
<https://snohomishcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/48010/Community-Coming-Together-Opioid-Response-Group-Established-with-Multi-Agency-Commitment>
- 4) Information Sharing Guide App: Data Sharing and Mapping Committee of the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana
- 5) Migrant Students Records Exchange Initiative (MSIX):
<https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/recordstransfer.html>
- 6) Oddysey Public Access (MyCase) <https://secure.in.gov/judiciary/2984.htm>
- 7) Indiana Health Information Exchange. <https://www.himss.org/indiana-health-information-exchange-ihie>

References